UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Security Council extends suspension of certain economic sanctions against Federal Republic of Yugoslavia until 18 September; Russian Federation abstains from voting on resolution.

* Secretary-General, in Geneva, attends ceremony commemorating fiftieth anniversary of United Nations; receives Presidents of Switzerland and France.

* In address to Economic and Social Council, Secretary-General says development of Africa is essential and urgent task; calls on world community to increase assistance to continent.

* Secretary-General to convene meeting of senior United Nations officials later this week to discuss situation in former Yugoslavia.

* Byung Suk Min of Republic of Korea appointed as first Chief of Mission of United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia.

* UNHCR says humanitarian situation in Sarajevo is bleak; urges Bosnian Government to reverse decision to tax humanitarian organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

* Aircraft flying from Serb-controlled territory fires rockets at Government power station near Bihac; two mortar rounds impact near UNPROFOR headquarters in Sarajevo.

* International Tribunal for Rwanda is actively investigating 400 individuals suspected of war crimes, Secretary-General reports.

* UNHCR resumes voluntary repatriation programme for Rwandan refugees in Zaire's Goma region.

* UNDP to host meeting on situation in Rwanda and progress in implementing Programme for National Reconciliation in Kigali on 6 and 7 July.

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For information media—not an official record

* Ad Hoc Group of States Parties to Convention on Prohibition of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons to meet in Geneva from 10 to 21 July.

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The Security Council today extended its suspension of certain economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) until 18 September. Restrictions on air travel, maritime traffic, sporting events and cultural exchanges were originally suspended by resolution 943 (1995) for 100 days, provided that the border between the Federal Republic and Bosnia and Herzegovina were closed. The suspension was extended for 100 days by resolution 970 (1995), and for a further 75 days by resolution 988 (1995).

The Council took today's action by adopting resolution 1,003 (1995) by 14 votes in favour to none against, with the Russian Federation abstaining. It noted the measures taken by the Federal Republic to maintain the closure of its border with Bosnia and Herzegovina with respect to all goods, except foodstuffs, medical supplies and clothing for essential humanitarian needs. The Council also reaffirmed the importance of further efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the border closure.

The Council renewed its call for early mutual recognition between the States of the former Yugoslavia within their internationally recognized borders. It urged the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to take the important first step of recognizing Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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Continuing his visit to Geneva, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today participated in a ceremony commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. He received President Kaspar Viliger of Switzerland and President Jacques Chirac of France before the proceedings began. Among the dignitaries attending the ceremony were the Vice-President of South Africa, F.W. de Klerk; the Prime Minister of Latvia, Maris Gailis; the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Yasser Arafat; and the President of the General Assembly, Amara Essy.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali also had meetings today with Foreign Minister Mohamed Salah Dembri of Algeria; Defence, Sciences and Personnel Minister Gary Punch of Australia; and Deputy Foreign Minister Li of China.

Yesterday, the Secretary-General addressed the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council and opened the high-level segment on development in Africa. He also met with the organizations elected to the Board of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) which have consultative status with the Council.

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In his address to the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General said the development of Africa was one of the most essential and urgent tasks facing the United Nations. He called on the international community not merely to maintain but to raise its assistance to the continent, noting that it had been the world's only region not to benefit from increasing private capital flows to developing countries.

The United Nations must help Africa strengthen its regional cooperative structures, he continued. Economic, customs and administrative obstacles, as well as infrastructural and communications shortcomings, could all be overcome by better inter-African cooperation. The Organization should also help African countries to diversify their economies. Assistance should be provided to create new export capabilities and to diversify production, with a shift towards non-traditional sectors.

The Secretary-General urged the international community to tackle Africa's debt problem, saying many African countries were crushed by an unbearable external debt burden. However, international efforts would not succeed unless Africans took their fate into their own hands. "Africans themselves -- all Africans -- must become the driving force behind development efforts", he concluded.

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The Secretary-General will convene a meeting of senior United Nations officials in Geneva later this week to discuss the situation in the former Yugoslavia, a spokesman for the Organization announced today. The meeting will probably take place on Friday or Saturday. It will be attended by Special Representative Yasushi Akashi; the Co-Chairman of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg; the Commander of the United Nations Peace Forces (UNPF), Lieutenant-General Bernard Janvier; and possibly by Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding.

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Byung Suk Min of the Republic of Korea has been appointed as the first Chief of Mission of the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO). Mr. Min, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Czech Republic since 1992, has been a career Foreign Ministry official since 1976.

Overall command and control of the three United Nations operations in the former Yugoslavia is exercised by Special Representative Yasushi Akashi and by UNPF Commander Lieutenant-General Bernard Janvier.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) today said that only 8 per cent of the 6,000 metric tons of humanitarian aid required by Sarajevo had been delivered in June. The agency added that the situation in the city was as bad as it had ever been. This morning, a convoy carrying 60 tons of flour over the Mount Igman route came under mortar attack, leaving one peace-keeper wounded and one truck damaged. The UNHCR condemned such attacks on humanitarian convoys, describing them as outrageous.

In another development, the UNHCR announced that the Bosnian Government had introduced a heavy tax on all humanitarian organizations, including non-governmental organizations, individuals and projects, in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The agency said that decision should be reversed, warning that some organizations might otherwise halt their humanitarian operations.

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United Nations observers near Bihac today reported that an aircraft flying from Serb-controlled territory had fired four rockets at a power station controlled by Bosnian Government forces. The rockets did not land within the safe area. However, nine shells impacted in the town today, causing two civilian casualties.

The situation in Sarajevo was tense, although the levels of fighting had declined from yesterday. Two mortar rounds landed near the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) headquarters in the city, while four observation posts were either directly or indirectly targeted. United Nations traffic on the Mount Igman road continued to come under fire from Bosnian Serb positions. Meanwhile, there was an increase in the use of heavy weapons in Srebrenica. Yesterday, one civilian was killed and two were injured by shelling in Gorazde.

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The Deputy Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda has been actively investigating serious violations of international humanitarian law and acts of genocide from Kigali and The Hague, according to the Secretary-General. In a report to the Security Council dated 30 June, he said the investigation was focusing on some 400 suspects. It was being conducted in Rwanda and other African countries, and in Europe and North America, where the principal planners of the genocide which occurred last year were believed to be located.

The Secretary-General expressed the hope that the necessary agreements on the establishment of the Tribunal's seat in Arusha, Tanzania, would soon be finalized. However, he noted that the Prosecutor's Office in Kigali had yet to become operational. Such a presence had been mandated by the Security Council and would have a vital socio-educational impact on the people and Government of

Rwanda. The problem of impunity for crimes committed in Rwanda must not only be addressed but must also seen to be addressed by the people most directly concerned.

The approval by the General Assembly of a budget for the Tribunal would greatly facilitate its operational development, he went on to say. That action would permit the accelerated recruitment of personnel and the conclusion of the necessary contractual commitments. It would also permit the planning of a work programme for investigation, the preparation of indictments and the holding of trials.

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The UNHCR has resumed its voluntary repatriation programme for Rwandan refugees in camps in the Goma region of Zaire. Twenty refugees today travelled from the Kibumba camp to the Rwandan border town of Gisenyi, and were then transported onward to their home communes. UNHCR's special envoy for the Great Lakes region, Carrol Faubert, said the number of returnees was expected to increase, adding that voluntary repatriation was the only realistic solution to the refugee problem.

From December 1994 to March 1995, the UNHCR repatriated some 13,000 Rwandan refugees from the Goma camps. However, the return movement ground to a halt following the forcible closure of camps for internally displaced people in south-western Rwanda in April and reported incursions into Rwanda from Zaire by former Rwandan soldiers. There are currently some 720,000 Rwandan refugees in the Goma camps, and another 600,000 and 190,000 in Tanzania and Burundi respectively.

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Representatives of the Rwandan Government, donor countries, and United Nations agencies will meet in Kigli on 6 and 7 July to discuss the situation in Rwanda and progress in implementing the Programme for National Reconciliation and Social-Economic Rehabilitation. The meeting is being organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The Programme for National Reconciliation was adopted in Geneva last January, with donor countries making pledges totaling $600 million. To date, 50 per cent of those pledges have been committed, but only 18 per cent have been disbursed. The UNDP is helping the Rwandan Government keep track of the commitments and expediting disbursements through its Trust Fund for Rwanda.

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The Ad Hoc Group of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and their Destruction will meet in Geneva from 10 to 21 July. The Group, which comprises 132 States parties, was established last year to consider measures, including possible verification measures, to be included in a legally binding instrument.

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